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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Halloween Food Safety Tips for Parents

San Bernardino: Halloween is a holiday that often is celebrated by trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving, and costume parties. Follow these simple steps to help your children have a fun and safe Halloween.

- Children should not snack while they are trick-or-treating. Urge your children to wait to
 eat their treats until they get home and you have a chance to inspect the contents of
 their "goody bags."
- To help prevent children from snacking, give them a light meal or snack before they head out. Don't send them out on an empty stomach.
- Tell children not to accept (and especially not to eat) anything that is not commercially wrapped. Do not eat homemade treats made by strangers.
- Parents of very young children should remove any choking hazards such as gum, peanuts, hard candies or small toys that children might receive while trick-or-treating.
- Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.

And remember these tips for Halloween parties or fall festivals:

- If juice or cider is served to children at Halloween parties, make sure it is pasteurized
 or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Untreated juice or cider will have a
 label indicating that it was not pasteurized or otherwise treated.
- No matter how tempting, do not taste raw cookie dough or cake batter.
- "Scare" bacteria away by keeping all perishable foods chilled until serving time. These
 include finger sandwiches, cheese platters, fruit or tossed salads, cold pasta dishes
 with meat, poultry, or seafood, and cream pies or cakes with whipped cream and
 cream cheese frostings. Cold temperatures help keep most harmful bacteria from
 multiplying. Do not leave the food at room temperature for more than two hours.

For more information, contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283 or visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dehs.

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